

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

The CIA: A Time of Quiet Pursuits

By Chalmers M. Roberts
Washington Post Staff Writer

After the heady days of Allen Dulles and the strong-willed leadership period of John McCone, the Central Intelligence Agency has settled down to a quiet way of operating under the direction of Richard Helms.

Talk of the CIA as an "invisible government" has waned. Aside from the continuing major operation in Laos, the agency is involved, as far as an outsider can tell, in nothing to match the derring-do of the past when it overturned the government in Guatemala, helped oust the Premier in Iran, tried but failed to oust Sukarno in Indonesia and concocted the Bay of Pigs operations which turned in to disaster.

Officials in other agencies say the CIA now is firmly under control. One official in a position to know commented that Helms is a "very cooperative, responsible guy who gets full marks for inter-agency relationships."

President-elect Nixon has announced that he will keep Helms at the head of CIA. A spokesman for Nixon adds that the President-elect felt that Helms was a nonpartisan career man who

had demonstrated ability to handle the office. A check, he added, convinced Nixon that he has done a fine job.

After the Bay of Pigs there was a great hue and cry about the CIA being out of control. The late Robert F. Kennedy and Gen. Maxwell Taylor looked into the problem and Taylor, now a presidential adviser, is represented as currently believing the agency now is fully under presidential control.

Problem Involved

Control, however, as one official put it, involves a problem: "busy people."

Aside from the President's own ways of enforcing control, there is a three-man board charged with the job of overseeing CIA activities. It is composed of Charles E. Bohlen, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs; Paul H. Nitze, the Deputy Secretary of Defense; and Walt W. Rostow, the White House assistant for National Security Affairs.

How good a job this trio does is impossible to determine but others are satisfied.

A key criticism in the Bay of Pigs investigation was that the CIA's intelligence gathering functions were entwined with the operational efforts, and that the intelli-

gence was used to prove the operation would be a success.

Now, it is contended, that umbilical cord has been cut. As a result, officials outside CIA say, there is a new confidence in the CIA's intelligence work.

The CIA has two parts: black operations (the cloak and dagger stuff) and intelligence gathering and collation. Heading the first is Thomas H. Karamessines with the title of Deputy Director, Plans; heading the second aspect is R. Jack Smith as Deputy Director, Intelligence. Both, like Helms, are long-time professionals in the business. Karamessines's deputy is Cord Meyer.

Expenses Go Up

The agency's budget, well hidden in the Congressional appropriations, is highly secret. (The conventional guess is \$500 million a year.) Some say the figure has gone up since the reconnaissance satellites (spies-in-the-sky) have begun to produce stacks of pictures from all over the world which require a vast number of interpreters. The cost of the satellites themselves, however, is in the Pentagon budget.

The CIA is said to have one current money problem growing out of the publicity at the discovery that it was funneling money in to student organizations that had been used in the cold war struggle with the Soviet Union.

A review committee called for private or Congressional subsidies for such activities (and perhaps also for such radio operations as Radio Free Europe) but Secretary of State Dean Rusk has yet to approve the report or forward it. Presumably the clandestine subsidies are continuing. The problem will be in Nixon's lap next year, it now appears certain.

Helms came to the top via the black side of CIA and he had what is described as a modest relationship with Nixon, then the Vice President, in the initial preparations for the Bay of Pigs. During the 1968 campaign Helms on occasion briefed Nixon.

It thus appears that the Nixon-Helms relationship is off to a good start for the new Administration. Beyond that, much will depend on Helms' performance in the coming crises.